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NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE

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LONDON SW1A 2AZ

Roderic Lyne Esq CMG
Private Secretary to the Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London

cc: PS/SJS (B)
PS/Michael Ferguson (L)
PS/PYS (L+B)
PS/Mr Fell
16 February 1994
Mr Thomas
Mr Bell
Mr Watkins
Mr Williams
Mr Wood (L+B)
Mr Quin
Mr Maccabe
Mr Daniell
Mr Brooker
HMA Dublin
Mr Archer, R
Mr Beaton
Floates

PUS/
17 FEB 1994
N.I.O LONDON

Dear Rod,

ARTICLE FOR THE PRIME MINISTER

Towards the end of last week you discussed with Sir John Chilcot an idea we had here that the Prime Minister might write an article for publication - probably in the Irish News - in the week preceding the Sinn Fein Ard Fheis.

The thinking behind this was to continue the efforts we have been making through speeches and articles by my Secretary of State to recapture the public initiative from Sinn Fein following Gerry Adams' American trip, particularly with a view to maximising pressure on them prior to and during their Annual Conference or Ard Fheis. We have sought to do this particularly by putting Adams on the spot with regard to his calls for "clarification". This has meant using the Declaration itself to ensure that it is fully understood, and that the obscurities Adams claims to find are unreal. We have, of course, also been able to adduce various statements by the Taoiseach and others to support our contention that the Declaration's statement of principles removes any remaining justification for violence even in the republicans' own terms.

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DRAFT ARTICLE FOR PRIME MINISTER

Sir Patrick Mayhew's Irish Times article and his recent speeches (I attach examples) have been interpreted by some as in effect providing clarification. The attached draft article for the Prime Minister would inevitably be seen in the same light. We here would not regard that as either unhelpful or politically difficult. The Government's position, in which it has refused to be drawn into renegotiation or interpretation of the Declaration, is now firmly established, and it is in our own interest to remove the issue from Sinn Fein's lexicon of ways to damage HMG. Apart from some ritual attacks by Dr Paisley, our recent approach has not unduly worried unionists. It has been welcomed by the Irish Government.

Our proposed draft envisages a forthright and plain engagement by the Prime Minister with the concerns which Northern Ireland's nationalists - not simply republicans - have about the Declaration. We suggest that the article should be placed in the (pro-nationalist) Irish News to provide some symmetry with the Prime Minister's earlier contribution to the (pro-unionist) Newsletter.

Should the Prime Minister decide to take this course we would aim for publication on, say, Tuesday of next week.

A copy goes also to Chris Meyer and to John Sawers and Melanie Leech.

Yours,

Jonathan

JONATHAN STEPHENS

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